



## **GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPICIOUS MAIL, PARCELS OR OTHER SUBSTANCES ♦**

- Initial notification/consultation regarding a situation of a perceived threat from suspicious mail, parcels or other substances should be with the local law enforcement and the local/regional public health unit\*\*.
- Prior to an assessment being conducted to determine if the item poses a threat, appropriate precautions such as disabling the HVAC system, evacuation, etc., should be instituted. The local/regional public health unit can provide consultation and assistance regarding initial precautions.
- A **RISK ASSESSMENT** of the envelope/package for explosives, radioactivity or other risks to handlers must be conducted by the local HAZMAT team or other appropriate professionals who have the appropriate expertise and personal protective equipment to conduct the assessment. This assessment may require radiological monitoring, X-ray or other evaluation of the object. **All situations must be assessed by the local law enforcement agency.**
- If the assessment indicates the item poses no threat to human health and/or no suspicious substance is found, the object should be dispositioned according to law enforcement procedures.
- If the local law enforcement agency indicates there appears to be evidence that the parcel, package or other item may constitute a threat to human health, the local/regional public health unit must be notified for further instructions.
- The local/regional public health unit should contact the Division of Disease Control of the North Department of Health at 800.472.2180 or 800.472.9921 (State Radio) for consultation.
  - Consultation is available 24-hours/7 days/week.
- If after the consultation with the North Dakota Department of Health, it is determined that the object should be tested, and the product has been determined to be safe for transportation and testing, the North Dakota Department of Health must assign a control number before the object is transported for testing.
- Once a control number is assigned by the North Dakota Department of Health, the regional North Dakota Highway Patrol office should be contacted to arrange for transportation of the object for testing.\*\* In the Bismarck area, transportation of the object to the laboratory may be provided by alternative methods.

## **LABORATORY RESULTS**

- The time period for available results will depend on when the laboratory receives the sample, and the types of testing conducted on the product. Confirmatory results of anthrax testing are usually available in 24 hours after the laboratory has processed the sample.
- The laboratory will telephone results to the Division of Disease Control of the North Dakota Department of Health.
- The Division of Disease Control will notify the local/regional public health unit of the results.
- Local/regional public health will notify the sender where the sample originated, local law enforcement/fire department/HAZMAT and other persons who may have been in contact with the object.
- If the laboratory analysis indicates the agent is a hazardous biological or other type agent, the local/regional public health unit in consultation with the North Dakota Department of Health will provide information for appropriate follow-up and will coordinate the actions.

† Bioterrorism is a federal crime and the FBI has jurisdiction.

\*\* In some areas unit it may have been determined that this response should be delegated to another organization or agency such as Bismarck Fire and Inspections in Bismarck. Even though the response may be delegated to another agency, it is expected that the local/regional public health unit will be involved in the coordination of the necessary follow-up. When “local/regional public health” is used in this guidance it refers to the agency determined to be designated for the response.

\*\*\*Biological Agent Transport Kits are available at North Dakota Highway Patrol District Offices. These kits include a hard plastic sealable pail for transport, instructions, disposable gloves, a small plastic pail, biohazard bags, bleach wipes and chain of custody forms.